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Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

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Saturday, 14 April 2012, 11 a.m.

New York

President:	Ms. Rice	(United States of America)
Members:	Azerbaijan	Mr. Musayev
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Araud
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	India	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Tarar
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Mr. Sangqu
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 11.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2012/219, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Colombia, France, Germany, Morocco, Portugal, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Azerbaijan, China, Colombia, France, Germany, Guatemala, India, Morocco, Pakistan, Portugal, Russian Federation, South Africa, Togo, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2042 (2012).

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the voting.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2042 (2012), which authorizes the deployment of an advance monitoring team to Syria. We regret that it comes only after the Syrian people have for more than one year suffered unimaginable brutality at the hands of a regime that has prioritized its own survival over the needs, rights and aspirations of the people it should serve and protect.

For more than one year, the Syrian regime has murdered, arbitrarily detained, tortured, abused and terrorized innocent civilians. The death toll stands at more than 10,000; more than 10,000 remain in detention and 45,000 have fled across the borders. Throughout, the Syrian regime has ignored the calls of the international community, the League of Arab States, the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and the Security Council to stop the killing. It has made numerous commitments that it has failed to implement.

The six-point proposal of Mr. Kofi Annan, Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the Arab League, offers the last opportunity to finally put an end to the bloodshed. We pay tribute to Mr. Annan for his tireless efforts over the past six weeks. The relative de-escalation of violence achieved on 12 April was a tentative and positive first step towards ending the crisis. But it is just that, a first step. Tens of innocent civilians have been killed since 12 April, and heavy weapons remain deployed in population centres. Nevertheless, a narrow window now exists to improve the situation on the ground. That is why the Council has authorized the deployment of an advance mission to monitor the cessation of violence — and why, if it is sustained, we will work quickly to authorize a larger mission to monitor the cessation of violence and support the full implementation of Mr. Annan's six-point proposal.

Today's resolution is absolutely clear about the commitments that the Syrian regime must now fulfil. First, it must end the movement of troops towards, and begin to pull back from, population centres, and cease the use of heavy weapons. As the Joint Special Envoy has made clear, it must also return troops and heavy weapons to their barracks. Secondly, it must implement the full six-point proposal in its entirety. Thirdly, it must ensure that the monitoring mission that we have authorized can operate effectively, with full freedom of movement and access, freedom to interview individuals without retaliation against them, allow unobstructed communications and guarantee the mission's safety without prejudice to freedom of movement. The opposition, too, must refrain from violence and ensure that it gives the regime no excuse to renege on its commitments. Once the cessation of violence has been sustained, all parties must move quickly to engage in a Syrian-led political transition that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): For many months now, the situation in Syria

has, understandably, been the subject of the constant attention and alarm of the international community. There have been to many casualties and too much suffering for the Syrian people, with too many destructive consequences if the crisis continues to ratchet up — not only for Syria itself but for regional peace and stability.

From the very beginning, Russia has firmly and consistently called for the non-use of force by all parties and has emphasized the need for a political solution to the problems confronting the country through an inclusive political dialogue conducted by the Syrians themselves. Based on respect for Syria's sovereignty, we have cautioned against destructive attempts at external interference and against imposing any kind of illusory fixes.

We supported today's Security Council resolution owing to the need for a rapid deployment to Syria of the United Nations advance observer mission. The resolution addresses requirements both for the Government of Syria and for opposition groups to fully cooperate with monitors and fulfil the Annan six-point proposals. On the initiative of Russia and a number of other members of the Council, the initial draft resolution underwent substantive changes to make it more balanced, appropriately reflect realities and take into account the prerogatives of the Syrian Government in receiving the observer mission on its territory.

The observers, which will include a Russian officer, will face a difficult challenge. They will need a high degree of professionalism, courage and objectivity. It is necessary to establish favourable conditions for the work of the observers, including from the perspective of ensuring security. We now await the Secretary-General's early submission to the Council of specific proposals for launching a broad-scale United Nations observer presence following consultations with the Government of Syria.

We also agreed to the resolution based on the need to support the Annan mission. Russia not only welcomed the decision of the Secretary-General to appoint Mr. Annan but, countering those who predicted the allegedly inevitable failure of the Envoy's mission, we also provided vigorous and effective support. We are now at an extremely critical juncture. It is essential that all Syrian parties, including the armed opposition, quickly refrain from violence, strictly abide by the Annan plan and begin to organize a broad-based negotiating process. Russian will continue to be prepared to make its active contribution to meeting this challenge.

Mr. Wittig (Germany): This is the first Security Council resolution on Syria since the violent repression by the Syrian security forces started. We welcome the unity of the Council today. It comes deplorably late but, hopefully, not too late. Thanks to the commendable efforts of Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan, the cessation of fighting has by and large held in Syria. However, as we speak, reports are coming in of renewed attacks by the Syrian security forces. We must therefore remain vigilant. Too many commitments made by Damascus in the past have not been kept. We must not tolerate further brinksmanship. The time for delaying tactics is definitely over.

It is clear that the Syrian Government has yet to fully comply with the commitments made to the Joint Special Envoy and as demanded by the Security Council. Damascus has yet to make the fundamental change of course demanded by Kofi Annan to enable a durable cessation of violence in all its forms. Damascus has to halt military forward movements and return troops and heavy weapons to their barracks. Only when those steps are fully implemented will the conditions for a sustainable cessation of violence exist. Equally important, all other forms of violence and human rights violations — such as arbitrary detention, torture, abduction, sexual violence and violence against children — must end immediately.

We applaud the fact that the opposition groups have committed to a cessation of fighting despite having been shelled by Government forces until the very last moment.

The swift deployment of the advance observer team will be an important element for the sustainable cessation of violence. We look forward to the report of the Secretary-General on a potential observer mission next. But one thing is clear: the conditions for the deployment of observers must be in place. The Syrian Government must ensure that the advance team and the possible follow-on mission can freely and effectively implement their mandate. We know of too many other examples where United Nations missions have become a pawn in tactical games. We must not let that happen again. The credibility of the Security Council is at stake. We must send a clear message that any such impediments would come at a high price.

The deployment of an observer mission should also not lead to a mere freezing of the situation. A United Nations mission on the ground cannot serve as a substitute for the lack of will by the parties. Close and early linkage with the political transition process as foreseen in the six-point proposal by Mr. Annan is required, not least as an eventual exit option for the observers. One more thing: accountability for the crimes committed must be a central element of the transition process. There cannot be a return to the status quo ante.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our full support for the laudable efforts of Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan and his team.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China consistently maintains that the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Syria and the choice and will of the Syrian people should be respected. The Syrian crisis should be resolved in a just, peaceful and proper manner through political dialogue. We urge all parties, including the Syrian Government and the opposition factions, to strictly honour their commitments to cease all acts of violence and create conditions for the launch of a Syrian-led inclusive political process.

Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan's mediation is the practical way out and an important channel for the political settlement of the Syrian crisis. China appreciates and supports the efforts made by Mr. Annan for a political solution of the Syrian crisis. We urge all parties in Syria to take real actions to support and cooperate with Mr. Annan in his mediation and continue the process of a political solution of the Syrian issue.

We call on the international community to continue its support for Mr. Annan's mediation efforts. We need to guard against any attempt to create difficulties or trouble for that mediation. Any words or deeds that stand in the way of Mr. Annan's mediation efforts are unacceptable and must be firmly opposed. What the relevant parties say and do about the Syrian issue should contribute to an easing of the tensions, a cessation of violence, the launch of a political dialogue and the maintenance of peace and stability in Syria and the Middle East, rather than the other way around.

The imminent deployment of the advance team of the supervision mission in Syria with the consent of the Syrian Government to swiftly kick off the task of supervision and the cessation of violence will help consolidate the progress made by Joint Special Envoy Annan's mediation efforts, fully implement Mr. Annan's six-point proposal and launch the political process at an early date. We hope that the advance team will fully respect Syria's sovereignty, act in strict accordance with the mandate of the Security Council, carry out its mission in a neutral, objective and just manner, make good preparations for the deployment of the supervision mission and play an active and constructive role in sustaining the cessation of violence and bringing about lasting peace and stability in Syria.

We also hope that the Syrian Government and the other relevant parties will vigorously support and cooperate with the advance team. We hope that the Secretary-General will put forward his proposals on the deployment of the supervision mission as soon as possible.

In view of those remarks, China voted in favour of resolution 2042 (2012), which the Security Council just adopted

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Kingdom of Morocco appreciates the efforts of the Security Council and its adoption by consensus today of its first resolution on the crisis in the sisterly country of Syria (resolution 2042 (2012)). The resolution is a practical translation of the hard work and intentions of the Security Council to further the success of the good-faith efforts of Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan on behalf of the United Nations and the League of Arab States to end the violence, achieve a political and peaceful solution to the crisis in Syria, and implement resolution 66/253, the declarations of 5 April 2012 and the relevant resolutions of the League of Arab States.

Since becoming a member of the Security Council, Morocco has worked with the other members in all efforts to enable the Council to speak with one voice, as that was the only way to influence events in Syria. We have also emphasized the positive and effective influence that all relevant parties have had on the country. We believe that today's resolution is an important milestone. We hope that it will be a decisive basis for the Security Council to address the situation in Syria.

The League of Arab States, which, since the beginning of the crisis, has played out an effective and constructive role in order to end the bloodshed and

resolve the situation in Syria in a wise manner and without resort to violence, expressed at its most recent summit, held in Baghdad, its strong support for the mission of Mr. Kofi Annan as it sought to achieve a rapid and comprehensive end to all acts of violence in Syria, while emphasizing the complete and immediate implementation of the six-point proposal presented by the Joint Special Envoy and accepted by all parties, so that a political solution for the crisis in Syria could be found and a response provided for the legitimate aspirations of the brotherly people of Syria.

The resolution adopted by the Security Council today is a quick response to the beginning of the implementation of the ceasefire in Syria as of yesterday morning. It has come into being after one year of violence and a period of international efforts that required swift action to call upon the Government of Syria and the opposition to end violence in all its forms and in a manner corresponding to their responsibilities, for the purpose of the allowing the full implementation of Mr. Annan's six-point proposal.

In today's resolution, the Security Council decided to deploy an advance team to Syria. We hope that its deployment and actual work will start as soon as possible in order to verify the end of all acts of violence and create appropriate conditions for the deployment of an observer mission.

In adopting all those measures, the Security Council has reaffirmed its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity of Syria, as well as to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter. We very much hope that our brothers in Syria, both in the Government and in the opposition, and according to their respective positions and responsibilities, will work with Mr. Annan in order to enable the success of his good-faith efforts and empower the people of Syria to heal their wounds, unify their ranks and achieve their legitimate aspirations to stability and dignity.

Mr. Tarar (Pakistan): Today is indeed an important day for the peaceful resolution of the situation in Syria. It is also proof that the Security Council can indeed come together to fulfil its role in the global scheme of things. We are deeply appreciative of the spirit of accommodation exhibited by all Security Council members.

The Council's adoption of resolution 2042 (2012) is an important step in our overall objective of promoting a peaceful political solution to the situation in Syria, with full respect for that country's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Council's unanimous support of that objective sends a strong and unambiguous message of unity and commitment, urgency and responsibility, in addressing a situation that has had tragic humanitarian consequences and that has the potential to negatively affect an already fragile regional situation.

A central element of the resolution is the Council's unanimous and strong support for the efforts of the Joint Special Envoy, Mr. Kofi Annan. His efforts and mission have not only brought the Council together around a common platform, they have also given us hope for the success of our collective goal. This is an example of how preventive diplomacy and mediation can deliver under principles of objectivity, balance, engagement and dialogue. Pakistan has backed the Special Envoy's mission from the outset, and we will continue to support his efforts. We believe that all sides in all quarters should cooperate fully with him to ensure the success of his mandate. Any steps or actions that might undermine his work should be avoided. We hope that the Council will stay the course in its collective pursuit of a peaceful political settlement of the Syrian crisis.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council's message today is, first and foremost, a call to the Syrian Government to cease its violence and the unfettered repression of its people, which has jeopardized peace and security in a region that is already experiencing an extremely fragile situation. The world has watched with the unprecedented violence with horror; the authorities there are responsible for enormous levels of death and torture and violations of every human right.

Finally, after more than a year of such atrocities, the Council has adopted a resolution (resolution 2042 (2012)) that seeks to end the violence and bring about political dialogue. The basis for that dialogue has been established by the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, Mr. Kofi Annan. We believe that his management and efforts deserve our full support and gratitude. The presence of a United Nations mission will require the full backing and participation of the Government of Syria. That is what we are seeking and what we hope will be achieved.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): France welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2042 (2012). We hope that it will mark a turning point in the crisis in Syria. The point is to quickly deploy a strong and reliable United Nations mission with the task of verifying the implementation of Mr. Annan's plan. With this resolution the Security Council makes that goal its own. We hope that in the short term the resolution will open the way to an end to brutal violence and that we will be able to say to the Syrian people that the time of indiscriminate violence is finally over.

Since six o'clock Thursday morning the violence has subsided; however, the attacks against civilians in Homs today have confirmed the doubts that may exist as to the reality of the Syrian regime's commitment. We will very soon know if Syria will fulfil its commitment. If that does not happen, it will be the responsibility of all members of the Council to consider the measures that should be taken. We will judge the Syrian regime by its acts and nothing else.

Let us be clear: this partial de-escalation of repression comes very late, after more than 10,000 Syrians have fallen to the brutal violence of the Damascus regime. The perpetrators of this barbaric repression of a peaceful civilian population will not go unpunished, and I am happy that today, finally, the Security Council has been unanimous in recognizing their criminal responsibility.

Above all, we cannot consider this de-escalation of repression to be enough; it is up to the Syrian Government to fully and immediately fulfil the commitments it has made to the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States. The collective message we are sending today is an appeal for a halt to violence in every form — not just heavy artillery but also torture, arbitrary arrests, forced disappearances and sexual violence, all of which are violations of human rights and have been committed systematically and on a huge scale by the Syrian regime's security forces for 13 months.

Today's resolution enables the deployment of an advance mission to observe and assess the halt to the violence and to test the seriousness of the Syrians' commitment before authorizing a mission with enough scope to cover the whole territory. Such a mission cannot act without the withdrawal of the Syrian authorities' troops and heavy weaponry, as Mr. Annan requested in the Security Council and as today's resolution recalls. Nor can it act if the Syrian regime does not respect the guarantees required of it by the Council. It is up to all Council members to reinforce that message to the Syrian authorities.

In sending this first mission, and, we hope, a second one soon after, we are not seeking merely to freeze the situation on the ground. The Council is supporting Mr. Annan's plan of action, designed to facilitate Syria's political transition to democracy in order to meet the aspirations that the Syrian people have so courageously expressed. Those are the conditions for launching the political process that we are attempting today to create on the ground by ending the violence and restoring the hope of the Syrian people that a peaceful political solution is possible.

This resolution marks another turning point: the rediscovered capacity of the international community to speak with one voice in response to the Syrian crisis and to contribute to a peaceful transition to democracy. That return by all to responsible action is another reason to rejoice. It is unquestionably a genuine reason for hope for the people of Syria. I would also like to stress France's appreciation for the efforts of the United Nations, the Secretary-General and Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan, whose task is as difficult as it is crucial. It is thanks to all of their efforts that we have been able to act as one.

But that consensus is fragile. The line separating us from the abyss of a civil war or its regional ramifications is a narrow one. Let us not deceive ourselves: there can be no other process if this one founders through the irresponsible actions of some who have stubbornly propped up a regime that has given proof of how unworthy it is to govern Syria. Today we finally have a hope of a peaceful solution to the crisis in Syria. France therefore solemnly calls on all members of the Council to support unreservedly the efforts aimed at meeting the aspirations of the Syrian people.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri (India): India has consistently supported all efforts to resolve the Syrian crisis through an inclusive, Syrian-led political process that meets the legitimate aspirations of all sections of Syrian society. To that end, we have given our full support to the mission of Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan. Earlier this morning, our Minister of External

Affairs spoke to Mr. Annan and underscored India's support for his mission.

It is a matter of satisfaction that Mr. Annan's efforts over the past six weeks have resulted in a cessation of violence. We welcome that development and the commitment of the Government of Syria to the six-point plan that Mr. Annan has proposed. We expect that the Syrian opposition will also adhere to the relevant parts of the plan, renounce violence and cooperate fully with Mr. Annan.

We voted in favour of resolution 2042 (2012) today so that an advance team of the United Nations supervision mission may be deployed expeditiously to monitor the cessation of violence. We hope that all parties, including the opposition, will implement their commitments and cooperate with the mission. It is also necessary that the mission carry out its work impartially, fairly and independently, with due respect for Syria's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity.

For the success of the Annan plan and the observer mission, it is necessary that they be accompanied by an inclusive Syrian-led political process. The cessation of violence should create a conducive environment for such a process to start as early as possible. We have noted the commitment of the Government of Syria to such a process. We expect that the opposition will also engage seriously in the process, so that the crisis is resolved without any further bloodshed; peace, stability and security are re-established; and the people of Syria are able to focus their energies on socio-economic development.

For the success of the Annan mission, it is also necessary that all countries in Syria's neighbourhood and beyond facilitate and extend their support for a political resolution of the Syrian crisis under the auspices of the Joint Special Envoy. India, for its part, will continue to extend full support for the impartial implementation of Mr. Annan's six-point plan.

Mr. Menan (Togo) (*spoke in French*): My country welcomes the Security Council's unanimous adoption today of resolution 2042 (2012), on Syria. This is an important event in the light of the fact that several times in the past the Council has failed to speak with one voice on the serious crisis in Syria. The adoption of this resolution constitutes still greater support by the Council to the mission led by Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States Kofi Annan, reinforcing its presidential statement of 5 April (S/PRST/2012/10).

Today the Council has authorized the deployment of a limited observer team to Syria to monitor the cessation of violence by all parties, so as to facilitate the immediate and full implementation of the Joint Special Envoy's six-point plan, which entered into force on 12 April. In doing so, the Council has demonstrated its engagement and resolve to work as one to find a timely and lasting solution to the crisis that Syria has lived under for more than a year. My country strongly supports the implementation of the terms of the resolution by all parties. We take this opportunity to renew our support for Mr. Annan and his team.

The Syrian people have long awaited such an action from the Security Council. It is therefore important that all of its members — especially those that hold some sway with the Government or any element of the opposition — work to promote the resolution's implementation. The resolution should pave the way towards an inclusive political process, involving all Syrians in building a free, peaceful and prosperous nation.

Mr. Musayev (Azerbaijan): From the very beginning, Azerbaijan has consistently supported all efforts in connection with the situation in Syria aimed at ending violence, overcoming the crisis and finding a solution by peaceful means and through dialogue.

From the outset, we have also expressed our full support for the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, Mr. Kofi Annan, and for his six-point proposal. Needless to say, the Joint Special Envoy is doing his utmost and exploring all possible avenues to end the Syrian crisis peacefully. We highly appreciate his efforts in that regard. The Security Council supported the mission of the Special Envoy right from its inception. The adoption of resolution 2042 (2012) today is yet another illustration of the unanimity within the Council.

We note that the parties involved committed to implement the six-point plan of the Joint Special Envoy and started taking important practical steps to that end. At the same time, the resolution calls for the urgent, comprehensive and immediate implementation of all elements of the Envoy's six-point plan, which aim at bringing an immediate end to all violence and human rights violations, securing humanitarian access

and facilitating a Syrian-led political process leading to a democratic, pluralistic political system.

The resolution provides for the establishment of a United Nations supervision mission in Syria to monitor a cessation of armed violence in all its forms by all parties and for guaranteeing the effective operation of the mission, including its advance team. It is important that the resolution reaffirms the commitment of the Security Council to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria.

Azerbaijan voted in favour of the resolution based on that understanding and with the hope that its adoption would contribute to ongoing efforts aimed at encouraging dialogue, overcoming the crisis and putting an end to human suffering.

Mr. Moraes Cabral (Portugal): Portugal welcomes the adoption of resolution 2042 (2012). The Security Council has just sent a united message with its unanimous adoption of a resolution on Syria. It is a first step, although one that comes tragically late and in the wake of thousands of dead and injured. It is only a first step; others will have to follow to ensure the full cessation of violence and to avoid a civil war.

Portugal reiterates its full support and appreciation for the efforts of the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States. We call on the Syrian Government to cooperate with him fully and without delay and to immediately and visibly implement the six-point plan in its entirety, as it has committed to do.

Portugal also stresses the importance — indeed, the absolute necessity — of the withdrawal of all Syrian Government troops and heavy weapons from population centres to their barracks. Portugal also calls upon the Syrian Government to ensure the effective operation of the United Nations monitoring mission, including its advance team, as set forth in the resolution we just adopted. All parties must guarantee the safety of the United Nations monitors without prejudice to their freedom of movement and access. We reiterate our appeal for full, immediate and unimpeded humanitarian access. We also wish to stress the need for all those responsible for human rights violations to be held accountable.

We call on all parties to seize this opportunity, to cease all armed violence in all its forms and to fully cooperate with Special Envoy Annan, to initiate a Syrian-led, credible political process that will meet the legitimate expectations of the Syrian people in terms of freedom, democracy and equality.

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa): South Africa has always been deeply concerned about the deteriorating political, security and humanitarian situation in Syria. We emphasize that there is a need for the violence to cease. South Africa strongly supports the efforts of Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan, which have the ultimate aim of committing all sides to peaceful dialogue in order to promote an all-inclusive process of negotiations leading to a political outcome that responds to the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people. The situation in Syria remains fragile. We reiterate our call for all sides to the conflict to fully implement their commitments under the six-point plan of Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan.

We welcome the fact that the Syrian Government has started to implement its commitments under the plan. We call on all parties, including the opposition, to sustain the ceasefire. In that regard, South Africa supports the call made by Joint Special Envoy Annan regarding the urgent deployment of a United Nations observer mission to verify and monitor the ceasefire. We call on all sides to the conflict to guarantee the safety and freedom of movement of such a mission, once it is deployed.

We are deeply pleased that the Council has been able to unanimously adopt resolution 2042 (2012) today, providing for the deployment of the advance team of the United Nations observer mission.

As we work towards the resolution of the Syrian crisis, it is vital that the international community respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria and work with the Syrian people to bring about a peaceful political solution to their crisis.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Guatemala voted in favour of resolution 2042 (2012), consistent with the position that we adopted from the very beginning of the situation taking place in the Syrian Arab Republic. We have always maintained that the violence must cease immediately and that the only way out is through a process of political dialogue led by the Syrians themselves that leads to the reforms demanded by the people.

Our support for this resolution is not only in pursuit of those goals, but also heralds our full support

for the initiative of the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, Mr. Kofi Annan. Likewise, it reflects our continuing support for the League of Arab States in seeking a peaceful outcome to the situation that has brought us together today.

My delegation considers today's resolution as an opportunity, perhaps the only opportunity, to reverse the spiral of violence and take a first step towards a better future for all Syrian citizens.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the United States.

After more than a year of brutal violence inflicted by the Government of Syria on its own people, after close to 10,000 deaths, after driving almost 45,000 Syrians out of their country and many more out of their homes, and after the grotesque destruction by Syria's own armed forces of Syrian towns and neighbourhoods, the Syrian Government has claimed that it is finally ready to step back from its murderous policies.

Today, with resolution 2042 (2012), the Security Council has indicated that it will judge the Syrian regime by its actions, not its words. The Council has authorized an advance group of monitors to verify the Syrian Government's compliance. In doing so, the Council has taken a step towards fulfilling its own responsibilities. And it is about time.

On Thursday, the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, Kofi Annan, reported that a "fragile calm appears to be prevailing" in Syria. We all hope that it will continue to prevail. But we are under no illusions.

Two days of diminished violence after a year of murderous rampage hardly proves that the regime is serious about honouring its commitments. Just today, Syrian forces resumed their brutal shelling of Homs and shot innocent mourners at a funeral in Aleppo. This resumed violence has cast serious doubt, yet again, on the regime's commitment to a cessation of violence.

Despite that aggression, the Syrian opposition has largely refrained from responding and has honourably sought to extend the fragile calm. The regime's tanks, heavy weapons and troops maintain their chokehold on population centres, ready to resume attacks at any time. Towns in large areas remain cut off, and the Al-Assad regime maintains snipers and roadblocks throughout Syria. Reports continue to come in that protestors have been killed and arrested and thousands of activists remain detained.

The Syrian Government must meet all of its commitments, not only the bare minimum. It must do so now. The suffering of the Syrian people has gone on far too long. For many months they protested peacefully, only to be met with violent retribution by their own Government. When some protestors finally dared to respond in self-defence, the retribution got immeasurably worse. The Arab League proposed a way forward to end the violence and meet the aspirations of the Syrian people. The regime of Bashar Al-Assad responded with broken promises, only to be followed by intensified violence.

In the final days before 12 April, we saw an outrageous escalation of violence by the Al-Assad regime, including the stepped-up use of heavy artillery on civilian areas and Syrian forces firing across borders into Turkey and Lebanon. This horrific cycle has lasted way too long. The Syrian people must be allowed to exercise their rights and freedoms peacefully, without fear of attack, detention, torture or death.

We commend the opposition for the strength it has shown in observing the ceasefire after the brutality it has endured. We demand that the Syrian Government at last honour its commitments. Those commitments are plain to everyone.

Both the Security Council and the League of Arab States have fully endorsed Mr. Annan's six-point plan. As Secretary Clinton noted, the plan is not a menu of options — it is a comprehensive set of obligations that requires visible and verifiable actions by the Government of Syria.

The resolution just adopted reaffirms the Council's support for all elements of the Envoy's plan, including an immediate end to violence, securing humanitarian access and a Syrian-led political transition that meets the democratic aspirations of the Syrian people. The resolution stresses that the Syrian Government must immediately fulfil its remaining obligations to bring about a full cessation of violence. It emphasizes the necessity of the Syrian Government immediately withdrawing all of its troops and heavy weapons from population centres, and returning its soldiers and their equipment to their barracks.

The resolution authorizes the Secretary-General to send an initial team of up to 30 observers, to verify that the Syrian Government is doing what it is obliged to do, including ensuring that the full monitoring mission can do its job unimpeded, with full freedom of movement, full access to people and institutions and unobstructed communications. The resolution also expresses the Council's intention to establish a larger observer mission once the Secretary-General presents a blueprint, and if it is clear that the ceasefire is holding and that the Government is cooperative. We see the advance team's deployment as an important test of the Syrian Government's intentions. If the Government obstructs their work, it will raise serious concerns about moving forward with the establishment of the full mission.

We await the Secretary-General's proposal for a full observation mission and express our willingness to work quickly with Council members to authorize such a mission, if indeed the Syrian Government fulfils its commitments.

The United States expresses its appreciation once again to Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan for his dedicated work to try to stop the violence, respect the rights of the Syrian people and begin a transition towards stable and legitimate governance.

The opportunity is there; the burden is now on the Syrian Government to seize it.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): As members may recall, in the statement I made to the Council during the meeting (S/PV.6627) it held on 4 October 2011, I described a painful event that had occurred that same day in Aleppo, in northern Syria, during which armed gangs assassinated Saria Hassoun, the son of the Imam of the Syrian Arab Republic, and a university professor. Coincidentally, at today's meeting, I can, on behalf of my country — both the Government and the people — inform the Council that last night the Syrian authorities arrested two young men who were involved in the assassination of the Imam's son. The two men — Syrian nationals — have confessed to their crime, stating that they had each received $800 for every crime they committed.

At the time I made that statement, some raised questions as to the presence of armed gangs in my country. However, today, fortunately, we have heard many colleagues encouraging those armed gangs to observe their commitments to the plan put forward by Kofi Annan, the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States. Syria, as all are aware, welcomed Mr. Annan's mission from the very beginning and has interacted with it, and the Special Envoy, in a positive and adequate manner. It has stated that it would spare no effort to ensure the mission's success, within the framework of the sentiments of national responsibility that are impelling us all to put an end to the painful crisis that Syria is experiencing, which undermines the safety and stability of the Syrian Arab Republic in its entirety — the State and the people.

My country's Government has taken serious measures aimed at fulfilling its obligations under the six-point plan. It has declared its commitment to stopping armed confrontations as from 6 a.m. yesterday, and has indeed done so. The Government is providing to Mr. Annan, in writing and on a regular basis, information on the measures taken to implement the six-point plan. In addition, my country, Syria, has also accepted the concept of a United Nations supervision mechanism that would operate within the limits of Syrian sovereignty, which the Syrian people consider a red line that there can be no justification for crossing. We are currently in negotiations with the Special Envoy and his technical team in Damascus on the drafting of a special protocol that would guarantee the deployment of a team of observers.

In return for this openness, cooperation and commitment on the part of Syria, and since Damascus accepted Mr. Annan's plan, terrorist operations have escalated, including acts of aggression and the killing of Government forces and civilians; the sabotage and destruction of infrastructure; and the forcible eviction of peaceful citizens and their relocation to prefabricated camps in neighbouring countries, with the objective of laying the groundwork for the creation of a refugee crisis to be used for political ends and later built upon to establish so-called buffer zones that would, in turn, justify calls for foreign military intervention.

In that context, we find worrisome the ill intentions of some States members of the Council with regard to Syria, in that they deliberately do not hold

armed gangs accountable for their crimes or for their acts of aggression against Syrian civilians and military personnel.

For our part, we have offered, and provided, to Mr. Annan documented information on the violations that were perpetrated by armed gangs after the ceasefire went into effect yesterday. There have been 50 such violations, including the killing of dozens of civilians as well as army and law enforcement personnel, not to mention the destruction of many public and private installations.

What we find puzzling in this respect is that some of those who claim to care about human rights have paid no attention to the information submitted by numerous international bodies other than the Syrian Government about the grave human rights violations perpetrated by armed groups in Syria. Those violations include kidnapping and the holding of hostages for ransom as well as the torture and execution of members of the police force, the army and civilians who are regarded as supporters of the Government. Moreover, armed groups in Syria are recruiting child soldiers and using civilians as human shields. And to all this we can add the many in-depth field exposes published by major media organizations that confirm the fact that armed gangs in Syria are engaging in unprecedented criminal activities.

Here I would like to make mention of the important article published by the German magazine *Der Spiegel* concerning a meeting between its correspondent and two criminals in hospitals in Tripoli and Lebanon. In that interview, the latter admitted that they had slaughtered 150 people by knife as per the instructions that they had received from their commanders in the armed groups.

Syria expresses the hope that Mr. Annan will deal with the crisis in a comprehensive manner. It affirms that in return for the official Syrian commitment to guarantee the success of the mission, Mr. Annan must also hold the necessary meetings with the various Arab regional and international parties that have ties with the armed groups in order to ensure that they abide by the cessation of violence.

The success of Mr. Annan's mission cannot be guaranteed by official Syrian support alone; indeed, the aforementioned States must abide by their commitment to freeze and halt the funding, arming and training of armed groups, refrain from encouraging them to continue their acts of terrorism and stop providing safe haven to their members. Those countries must also stop escalating and encouraging the Syrian opposition to reject any initiative aimed at launching a comprehensive national dialogue with the goal of finding at a peaceful political solution to the crisis in Syria.

It is worth noting here that while Mr. Annan was holding intensive talks with his Syrian interlocutors, some parties were holding conferences in Istanbul in parallel to Mr. Annan's plan, in a clear attempt to circumvent his mission and the role of the United Nations as well as to undermine the mission's role and its chances of success in its attempt to help Syria emerge from the crisis. Some have even endorsed a funding mechanism that would enable Gulf countries to fund armed groups by offering salaries to their members, to say nothing of the pledges made by those attending the conference to provide $100 million to fan the flames of the crisis rather than extinguishing them.

Added to that are the calls made during the conference by the Foreign Minister of Qatar urging military intervention in Syria and the establishment of so-called safe zones on our territory. In that regard, we also note the statement made by the Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia that arming the Syrian opposition was necessary.

We wish to raise the question here of what it means when some States say that they support Mr. Annan's mission while at the same time they undertake parallel efforts aimed at ensuring the necessary funding for armed groups — to provide them weapons and militarize them — impose sanctions on the Syrian people and call for direct military intervention in my country.

All of that completely contradicts the text of Mr. Annan's plan. We would therefore like to affirm before the Council that the ongoing support for armed groups will pose a genuine threat to Mr. Annan's plan. The parties involved are responsible for shedding the blood of Syrians and spreading terrorism in the country. The countries that have imposed unjust economic sanctions on the Syrian people are also complicit in the crisis. Those States cannot shed crocodile tears over the difficulties facing Syrian citizens every day while they are themselves to a large extent responsible for those hardships.

What else could be the purpose for externally manipulating the exchange rate of the Syrian pound? What is the purpose of preventing Syrian expatriates from wiring money to their families in Syria? What could be the goal in damaging Syria's energy sector? Is the goal of all that to guarantee the well-being of the Syrian people and meet their demands for reform? What about the European Union's imposition of sanctions on Syria's Ministry of Energy? Will that help to deliver electric power to the Syrian people? All of this adds up to an unethical crisis that we must examine.

What is happening in Syria is a manifestation of a geopolitical conflict over regional roles. It is a settling of scores, some of them old and others of newer vintage. The main weapon in the conflict seems to involve pitting political pan-Arabism against extremist political Islam. Extremist manifestations are being spread in order to fuel future wars in the region that will come in the form of sectarian, religious and ethnic crises intended to fragment the region. All this aims at bringing an end to the last locus of coexistence, brotherliness and diversity in the region, as well as to entrench the concept of a confrontation among religions, cultures and civilizations.

In conclusion, Syria reiterates its commitment with regard to the Joint Special Envoy's plan. We are prepared to continue to cooperate with him in order to bring an end to the crisis in Syria. We hope that Mr. Annan will not allow any party to bypass his plan or circumvent its provisions. The resolution that the Council has adopted today requires the commitment of the countries that proposed it and voted in its favour and have continued to support armed groups in Syria.

While we believe that the resolution is not balanced, Syria believes that it is in its own interests to ensure the return of security and stability to our country. We hope that the countries that supported the resolution will implement it effectively and refrain from sending lethal and non-lethal assistance alike to the terrorists and armed groups.

Before I conclude my statement, I should also like to reiterate that the suffering, hopes and aspirations of the Syrian people go beyond being mere commodities in the hands of speculators in the marketplace of political interests and deals. The Syrian people do not need a few million dollars to buy bulletproof vests. Instead, they need help to live in safety, peace, freedom and stability without increasing tensions among its various factions. The Syrian people need the lifting of the unjust sanctions imposed against them, for they are resulting in billions of dollars in losses. That is the only way in which those who adopted today's resolution can help the Syrian people, rather than providing Israel with six submarines that can be equipped with nuclear weapons and creating tension in the region conducive towards more war and aggression. Whether Arab or not, the people of the region will serve as the fodder for such war.

(*spoke in French*)

My colleague the Ambassador of France mentioned the Syrian people in saying that the time of violence is a thing of the past. I completely agree with him. I would just remind him, however, that the time of trusteeship is over as well. His statement to the Syrian people is at the very least untimely, given that, on 17 April, they will celebrate their day of independence from French occupation.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on my list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.